

L&PS New Jersey Department of Law and Public Safety

Division of Gaming Enforcement

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DGE Moves to Exclude Alleged Organized Crime Boss From Atlantic City Casinos

ATLANTIC CITY - The New Jersey Division of Gaming Enforcement (DGE) has filed a petition to add alleged Philadelphia organized crime boss Joseph Anthony Ligambi to New Jersey's casino Exclusion List, which would bar him from entering any Atlantic City casino hotel.

Ligambi is the reputed boss of the Bruno/Scarfo Philadelphia organized crime family since former boss Joseph "Skinny Joey" Merlino was convicted of extortion, receipt of stolen goods, and illegal gambling charges last year.

Ligambi, 63, has a lengthy criminal history dating back to 1971. He was sentenced to life in prison, along with mob boss Nicodemo "Little Nicky" Scarfo, Salvatore and Larry Merlino, and five other members of the organized crime family, by the State of Pennsylvania in April 1989 for the 1985 murder of associate Frank "Frankie Flowers" D'Alfonso. The conviction was overturned in 1992 and he was retried, acquitted and released from prison in 1997. In 1988 Ligambi also was indicted for numerous federal RICO (Racketeering Influenced and Corrupt Organizations) violations along with other organized crime associates including "Little Nicky" Scarfo. Ligambi plead guilty to illegal gambling and received a 3 ½ year federal sentence.

The petition notes that Ligambi was observed in a casino hotel in Atlantic City. Information regarding Ligambi's alleged role in the Bruno/Scarfo organized crime family was also provided by officials in the Philadelphia Police Department and FBI as well the New Jersey State Police and New Jersey Division of Criminal Justice.

Attorney General David Samson remarked "To maintain the good reputation and integrity of our casino industry, criminals of this sort must be banned from entry into Atlantic City's casinos."

Preliminary placement on the Exclusion List is based on the DGE's position that an individual's presence in a licensed casino would be inimical to the interests of the State of New Jersey or of licensed gaming and is based on their association with organized

crime and prior convictions for serious offenses. An individual has 30 days to request a hearing to contest the exclusion petition.

DGE Acting Director Thomas N. Auriemma said “This petition is part of our continuing initiative to keep unsavory individuals out of New Jersey’s casino hotels.”

The Ligambi exclusion petition is being handled by DGE Assistant Attorney General George Rover. There are currently 154 individuals on New Jersey’s casino Exclusion List.

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